

Seat Belts Save Lives!

A Real Life Story

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The Good News and the Bad News

- The National Center for Statistics and Analysis reported in June 2006 that seat belt use by driver and passengers reached 73%. However, the seat belt use rate for occupants of all passenger vehicles slipped in the Northeast, from 67% to 62%.
- Seat belt use in the South, West, and Midwest are now statistically similar, while the Northeast continues to lag behind.
- What we know for sure: “Seat belt use rates continue to grow in states with stronger enforcement laws.”

Risky Behavior

- We should all know by now that “not wearing seatbelts is risky business.”
- The Naval Safety Center reported 78 traffic related deaths last year alone from military mishap reports.
- Sometimes it takes a close call before people take something such as wearing their seatbelts seriously.

I want to tell you a story about my niece

- Honor Student – graduated high school early.
- Currently attending college on a scholarship.
- Works 2 jobs – managing a dog kennel and working at a local department store - to buy her own college books.
- Made dean's list this year.
- Good all around young woman.
- Good driver – obeys the law.

My Story

- On Saturday, March 3, 2007, I had just such a close call. I'd like to share it with you so that you might think twice about not securing your seatbelts.
- My 18-year-old niece had gone out to grab a late night snack. At 10:45, I got a call from my sister telling me to get to her daughter [*because I was closer*] and that my niece had flipped her car.
- She gave me the approximate location and my husband and I were out the door.

What We Saw

- Flashing lights! Lots of flashing lights of ambulances, fire trucks, and police cars.

Next, we saw her car, upside down and smashed. I thought she must be dead.

- I ran screaming to the back of the ambulance and there she was, sitting up in the gurney – cuts, bruises and a laceration across her chest – but alive!

What Had Happened?

- She had been run off the road [we think by a drunk driver, although we will never know because he didn't stop to help her]!
- Trying to avoid getting struck by the other car, she had gone up a 'slight' embankment, and the car had flipped.
- She was able to unhook her seatbelt, crawl out and make her way out of the car.

Summary

- Riding to the hospital in the ambulance, one of the paramedics told me that he had seen many car wrecks, crashes, etc. and told me my niece would have been dead had she not had her seatbelt on! Most likely, she would have been ejected from the car.
- I hope you'll think about this story next time you get into your car and know that accidents do happen and that **seat belts do save lives!**
- My niece is proof of that!

